

Carlisle School Committee
Minutes
March 5, 2008
Ruth C. Wilkins Library, Robbins Building
6:30 PM

Present – School Committee: Nicole Burkel, Chair; Dale Ryder; Michael Fitzgerald, Chad Koski.

Present – School Administration: Marie Doyle, Superintendent; Heidi Zimmerman, Business Manager; Jim Halliday, Principal; Patrice Hurley, Principal; Karen Slack, Director of Student Support Services; Claire Wilcox, Assistant to the Superintendent.

Nicole Burkel called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Michael Fitzgerald made a motion to enter executive session to discuss a contract issue. Following the executive session, the committee would return to open session. Dale Ryder seconded the motion and all members present voted in favor as follows: Mr. Fitzgerald, yes; Ms. Ryder, yes; Ms. Burkel, yes; Mr. Koski, yes.

The meeting returned to open session at 7:08 pm

Public Comment Period

Ms. Burkel welcomed everyone to the meeting. She noted that the town caucus was held Monday and that there are 3 candidates for the two School Committee openings. She introduced the three: Don Rober, Bill Fink, and Louis Salemy (not present at the meeting). She then asked if any members of the public had comments.

Steve Herbst of School Street discussed a concern about 2 of the teachers (Cyd McCann and Steve Bober) who might lose their positions. He stated that he would like to push for an override and that he would like to be an advocate for these teachers. Mr. Fitzgerald suggested that Mr. Herbst set up a meeting with Ms. Doyle to discuss this concern.

Mary Storrs asked if there would be a chance for public input at the end of the budget discussion.

Review of minutes

Dale Ryder made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of February 6, 2008. Chad Koski seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of approving the minutes.

Communications/Correspondence

The following items were reviewed:

- Letter from Marcella Pixley requesting that her son be allowed to attend kindergarten at CPS next year
- Copy of the town report for 2007
- Packet from the March 5th Strategic Planning Committee meeting
- Letter from Heidi Zimmerman to the MSBA regarding the impact of the use of the wastewater treatment facility by other entities on the remaining reimbursement for the project
- Public hearing notice from the Carlisle Planning Board for the wireless facility in the Unitarian Church
- Thank you note to Transwitch Corporation for furniture donated to the school
- Thank you notes to the producers and directors of the 7th grade play
- Thank you note to the members of the principal hiring committee

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Marie Doyle reported on the following:

- Organizational review -- superintendent's sub-committee meeting
- Dr. Seuss Read Across America program
- New Middle School principal Joyce Mehaffey and the hiring process
- Strategic Planning Committee meeting at which the vision, mission, and core values were finalized
- STEP programs
- Primary Source presentation with Chiao Bin Huang at UMass regarding the Carlisle Chinese program
- 7th Grade Play – *Willy Wonka, Jr.*
- Gene Stamell's 4-week trip to China this summer for a teaching program
- Kenya school relationship with Peter Darasz's class
- Building Committee meeting and draft timeline for a new building

Administrator Reports

Elementary Principal Patrice Hurley represented the Administrative Team and reported on the following:

- Thanks to the CSA cultural enrichment committee for the Techsploration program
- MCAS March testing and teacher preparation
- Dr. Seuss Read Across America
- Intramural gymnastics

- Eastern District Music Festival
- Choral artist in residence
- MMEA performance by our Middle School choir
- Student Council Dance

Members'/Committee Reports

Michael Fitzgerald reported on recent meetings of the regional school committee. The committee is continuing the process of a superintendent search by gathering information from all areas of the community to develop criteria for the new superintendent.

Ms. Burkel reported on a meeting of the EDCO School Committee group. Topics discussed included world language, full day kindergarten, budgets and overrides, contract negotiations, and teacher and superintendent turnover.

Ms. Burkel reported on the first subcommittee meeting of the faculty committee for the organizational review process.

Mr. Koski reported on the first meeting of the school committee subcommittee.

Information/Discussion Items

- A. **School calendar for 08-09.** Committee members reviewed the proposed calendar for next school year, which has been approved by the Carlisle Teachers' Association. Ms. Wilcox presented the calendar and answered questions from members. A vote to approve the calendar will be taken at the next meeting. In the meantime the draft will be posted on the school website.
- B. **Superintendent's goals update.** Superintendent Marie Doyle discussed the status of her goals for the year. The following 4 goals were reviewed:
 - Oversee preparation of FY 09 budget. Ms. Doyle prepared two budgets, level funded and level service, and presented the budget to the School Committee, Finance Committee, and the Board of Selectmen. She has also presented to faculty and parents and has written about budget issues in the *Buzz* and provided information for the *Mosquito*.
 - Oversee Business Office during Ms. Zimmerman's maternity leave. Ms. Doyle led two technology committee meetings, and the Business Office functioned well with no issues in any area during Ms. Zimmerman's leave. She thanked Susan Pray and Claire Wilcox for their help in keeping the Business Office running smoothly.
 - Work with the School Building Committee on Spalding. Ms. Doyle attended a meeting at the MSBA on January 30th and is working on planning a timeline and the next steps in the process. She has written articles in the

Buzz and had phone discussions with *Mosquito* reporters to provide information.

- Oversee Phase II of the math review process and begin Phase I of the ELA review. The Math Review Team complete a summary, which was released in the November 29th *Buzz*. At a meeting in January a decision was made to stay with Everyday Math. A handbook for the program will be developed. She gave special thanks to Liz Perry, math specialist and Sue LaPorte and Steve Bober, ELA specialists. Mr. Bober and Ms. LaPorte have been heading up the ELA review and several meetings have been held.

Thornton Ash of the Finance Committee was present in the audience and stated that things went seamlessly in the finance area during Ms. Zimmerman's maternity leave and during the budget process. Ms. Burkel added that it has taken a tremendous amount of time to prepare the budget.

C. Facility Use Policy and fee Discussion. David Flannery, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds presented the proposed new policy regarding use of the school and a fee structure. He first gave background on the policy and the history of its development. He stated that he looked at the current policy, researched other schools, talked to our insurance company, and did various analyses. Mr. Flannery stated that we currently have 24 users of the facilities. The policy has been changed to reflect the way the facilities are being used. Language has been clarified and forms added for sign-off by users, including adherence to our anti-hazing policy, certification regarding local participants, and indemnity. Insurance rules were made consistent with those of the town of Carlisle.

Mr. Flannery then discussed the expenses of running the school and the fees charged for use of the facility. He also raised the question of whether fees should be charged for town programs. He distributed the current fee structure and recommended changes in the fee amounts. He stated that it's a problem to keep up the buildings with a reduced staff and that the school is in essence absorbing costs for outside user programs. He suggested that the School Committee might consider charging town affiliated groups for use.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked if it would be possible for Ms. Zimmerman to determine the incremental costs to the school for large programs like those of the Recreation Commission. He further stated that we should publicize the costs that actually support community programs. Mr. Flannery stated that if we had charged the Recreation Commission for its usage in 2006-2007, the cost would have been about \$40,000. Mr. Flannery stated that RecCom has made voluntary contributions to the school in the past, but this has not been done recently.

Mr. Koski stated that Concord-Carlisle Youth leagues have charged a field maintenance fee in the past couple of years, but that there is no extra fee for indoor sports.

Finance Committee member, Thornton Ash reported on discussions with the Recreation Commission regarding fees for their programs. Ms. Burkel suggested getting information from RecCom about their fee structure. She added that it's ideal that outside groups can take advantage of our space, but as budgets get tighter, it's harder and harder to support this use.

Mr. Flannery stated that the new fee schedule proposed is in line with that of other towns including Lexington, Chelmsford, and Concord.

Ms. Burkel asked how the scheduling and billing are handled. Mr. Flannery stated that a member of his staff currently works five hours a week and handles this.

Ms. Ryder expressed a concern that the increased fees might discourage some groups from using the school. Mr. Flannery stated that this might happen, but that the new fees are in line with those of other area schools. Ms. Ryder suggested that the fees should be reviewed on a more frequent basis. Ms. Doyle stated that in good budget times it's easy to be generous and in tight budget times we look for ways to save costs.

Mr. Koski asked whether many out of town groups use the school, and Mr. Flannery stated that we do not have any information on this, but that the recreation commission might be providing space to non-local groups.

Ms. Burkel stated that it might be better to increase fees over a few years rather than having a large jump next year. She would not like to see the facility use decline as the school is a town asset. She suggested that a hearing be held for building users. This will be done on April 2nd. The fee schedule will not be voted on until after the hearing, although the new policy will be voted on at the next meeting on March 19th.

The Committee thanked Mr. Flannery for all his work on the policy.

- D. **Budget.** Ms. Burkel stated that since the last SC meeting, Ms. Doyle has presented the budget to the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen. She stated that the Finance Committee suggested moving \$80,000 from the technology long-term budget to the operating budget along with a transfer of \$45,000 from free cash. This would result in not having an override. She asked for committee input on this. Members indicated that they were in favor of this.

Don Rober of the Long Term Capital Requirements Committee clarified the position of LTCRC on this and questioned how technology would be funded next year if this were done for the current budget. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that it is more important at this time to fund the direct education budget rather than technology. Ms. Burkel stated that there may be outside sources to help fund technology, but these sources would not be available to fund staff.

Mr. Ash raised a concern regarding the technology refresh cycle as the amount of equipment grows. Ms. Doyle stated that she has been meeting with the CEF and CSA leadership to discuss technology needs.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that the next step is to decide where the funds would be allocated in the budget. Committee members thanked the FinCom and LTCRC for their help in determining additional funding sources. Ms. Burkel asked Ms. Doyle and Ms. Zimmerman to come to the next meeting with a proposal as to how the \$125,000 in funds will be used.

Ms. Burkel opened the floor for comments.

Mary Storrs of Brook Street stated that she does not really understand the change in funding and does not see it as something creative and positive. Ms. Burkel explained that this is a way to retain staff but that it does present a problem for next year. Ms. Storrs stated that she thought there should perhaps be an override.

Alex Krapf of Ice Pond Road said that he was concerned about the approach to technology purchases because we don't account for the total cost of ownership of the equipment due to maintenance, replacement, and training costs. He does not think the school should be adding technology.

Other Business

Ms. Zimmerman asked if members would like to have information presented in any particular way for the fee discussion on April 2nd.

Citizens' Comments

Alex Krapf commented on the facility usage fee structure. He noted that the Carlisle Youth Commission has tried to be generous in making donations to the school when they use the facilities. These donations would likely not continue if they were charged a fee.

Adjournment

There was no additional business, and **Mr. Fitzgerald made a motion to adjourn the meeting to executive session to discuss a contractual issue. Ms. Ryder seconded the motion, and all members present voted in favor as follows: Mr. Fitzgerald, yes; Mr. Koski, yes; Ms. Burkel, yes; Ms. Ryder, yes.**

The public meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire M. Wilcox
Assistant to the Superintendent